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Hurdling helps UM steeplechaser

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HURDLING HELPS
UM STEEPLECHASER

MISSOULA--

Specializing in the hurdle races for three of his four years in high school, has helped George Cook become one of the top steeplechasers in the Northwest this spring.

Cook, a University of Montana freshman and native of Highland Falls, N.Y., was a hurdler in track his first three years of high school before concentrating his efforts on the mile run as a senior. He was clocked at 4:27 over the distance.

He also was an outstanding cross country runner in high school and came to Montana as a track and cross country athlete. Cook improved steadily last fall and copped second in the Big Sky finals behind the Grizzly's Wade Jacobsen

Last Saturday Cook got his first shot at a "genuine" steeplechase course at Pullman, Wash. According to NCAA rules a steeplechase course shall be 3,000 meters long with 28 hurdles and seven water jumps.

Cook won the freshman steeplechase and his time of 9:40.2 was faster than all the varsity competitors. Lewis said the clocking was excellent for this time of year, but added it was not a "quality" time. He said a "quality" time must be a run under the 9:10 barrier.

Lewis believes that Cook will improve and run the 3,000 meter obstacle course around the nine-minute mark. "He has the potential to develop into a national competitor in the event," Lewis said.

When asked how much Cook's hurdling as a prep athlete has aided him in the steeplechase Lewis said, "Cook's high school hurdling experience has given him confidence. He does not slow up for the hurdles and knows how to take them."

Lewis also was impressed with the smoothness at which Cook runs the race. "It's as if the obstacles weren't there," he said. Cook never breaks stride.

The New York transplant is a good student as well as an athlete. Last quarter he achieved a 2.8 grade point.

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